

Lake Pend Oreille winter drawdown in full progress

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SEATTLE — Residents on and around Lake Pend Oreille will continue to see lake levels decreasing as the winter draft proceeds, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Reservoir Control Center in Seattle.

The Corps operates Albeni Falls Dam, which regulates the level of Lake Pend Oreille. Drawdown from the lake's summer level of 2062-2062.5 feet began on Sept. 15; the drawdown is expected to continue to 2051 during the first week in November. Residents should expect to see the lake fall below 2054 during the last week of October, with a final target of 2051 by no later than Nov. 15.

A winter lake elevation recommendation was made late last week by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Those agencies, along with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Corps of Engineers, Bonneville Power Administration and other stakeholders reviewed results of the annual female kokanee spawner survey, recent winter lake elevation history, last year's lower Columbia River chum salmon spawning success, and the forecasted November 2008 – January 2009 precipitation trend in the Columbia River system.

Lake Pend Oreille's fall drawdown and winter level are managed in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and Idaho fish managers, Bonneville Power Administration and other stakeholders to benefit reproduction of the lake's shore-spawning kokanee. Kokanee, which are small, lake-resident sockeye salmon, are not native to the lake, but they serve as a major food source for Lake Pend Oreille's threatened native bull trout, and their population has been in decline. Information about the lake level for Lake Pend Oreille is on-line at:

<http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/nws/hh/basins/pend.html>.

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